

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PORT O 01073 292030Z

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

NEA-10 NIC-01 RSR-01 /101 W
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R 292006Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5579

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 1073

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS; PINT; TD

SUBJECT: "GUERILLA"ACTIVITY AND GOTT

REF: POS 1061

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

1. SUDDEN RASH OF INCIDENTS DESCRIBED REFTEL APPEAR TO HAVE PROPELLED NUFF FROM AN EMBARRASSMENT INTO A SERIOUS PREOCCUPATION FOR GOTT, WHICH HAS SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO MOUNT EFFECTIVE RESPONSE. THERE IS NO WAY NOW TO BLINK FACTS THAT ARMED GROUPS (PERHAPS 40 MEN IN AT LEAST SEVERAL BANDS) ARE ABLE TO GET AWAY WITH SCATTERED ATTACKS ON INSTALLATIONS AND PERSONS AND HAVE AT LEAST PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE FROM PORTIONS OF POPULATION. WHILE WE FORESEE NO SUBSTANTIAL FURTHER DEGRADATION OF SITUATION IN THE SHORT RUN, INEPTITUDE OF GOTT IN FACE OF NUFF CHALLENGE AND EFFERVESCENCE WITHIN PRIME MINISTER'S OWN PARTY (POS 1008) INDICATE THAT WILLIAMS CAN LOOK FORWARD TO A LIVELY AUTUMN.

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PAGE 02 PORT O 01073 292030Z

2. CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HERE HAS HELD THAT GOTT, HAVING

LEARNED ITS LESSON IN 1970, CAN FORESTALL EXTRA-LEGAL PROTESTS BY FIRM AND EARLY RESPONSE; THAT OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE SO BADLY DIVIDED AS TO PRECLUDE EFFECTIVE COOPERATION; AND THAT ANY REAL THREAT TO PNM MUST AWAIT EMERGENCE OF CHARISMATIC FIGURE. TO A CERTAIN EXTENT GOTT MAY BE CONCERNED THAT NUFF IS ON ROAD TO PARTIALLY INVALIDATING THESE PRECONCEPTIONS: GUERILLA-TYPE ACTIVITIES AND TERRORIST ACTS ARE DIFFERENT FROM UNDISCIPLINED STREET DEMONSTRATIONS OF 1970, AND FIRM RESPONSE (UNLESS QUICKLY SUCCESSFUL) RISKS UNLEASHING VICIOUS CIRCLE OF REPRESSION LEADING TO GREATER RESISTANCE; DIVISION AMONG MORE EXTREME ELEMENTS OF OPPOSITION ARE AT LEAST TEMPORARILY BLURRING AS THESE GROUPS SCENT GOTT VULNERABILITY; AND IMAGE OF SUCCESSFUL MEN IN THE HILLS PLUS SIMPLISTIC NUFF MESSAGE OF POWER FOR THE MASSES MIGHT REPLACE REQUIREMENT FOR CHARISMATIC INDIVIDUAL (OR ALTERNATIVELY PREPARE GROUND FOR ONE).

3. ON THE OTHER HAND POPULAR REVULSION AT NUFF EXCESSES, ANY SUCCESSES BY THE SECURITY FORCES, AND/OR ADROIT GOTT HANDLING OF CASTRO VISIT NEXT WEEK MIGHT WELL BE ENOUGH TO SHIFT POPULAR MOOD, A MERCURIAL ELEMENT AT BEST IN THE WEST INDIES, AND REVERSE APPARENT MOMENTUM NUFF ENJOYING AT MOMENT. WHILE OUR CONFIDENCE IN GOTT ABILITY TO MEET CURRENT CHALLENGE IN MOST EFFECTIVE MANNER IS NOT HIGH, WE DO NOT SEE ANY REASON TO THINK THAT NUFF AND ITS SYMPATHIZERS POSE ANY IMMEDIATE THREAT TO GOTT OR OVERALL STABILITY OF T&T. AS OF THIS TIME WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE US CITIZENS OR ECONOMIC PRESENCE ARE TARGETTED BY NUFF. MOFFAT

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